

Progress Report – Current Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups

1. Inquiry Panels:

These will undertake in-depth inquiries into specific and significant areas of concern on a task and finish basis, and will be expected to take around six months to complete to enable wide-ranging evidence gathering, and production of a final report with conclusions and recommendations for Cabinet (and other decision-makers).

a) **Natural Environment** (convener: Cllr Peter Jones)

Key Question: What should Swansea Council be doing to maintain, enhance and promote its natural environment and biodiversity, and in doing so promote the resilience of eco-systems?

Progress Bar:

Planning				Evidence Gathering				Draft Final Report			

The final report is now being drafted.

Projected End Date: January 2019

b) **Equalities** (convener: Cllr Louise Gibbard)

Key Question: How effectively is the Council meeting and embedding the requirements under the Equality Act 2010 (Public Sector Duty for Wales)?

Progress Bar:

Planning				Evidence Gathering				Draft Final Report			

Over the coming months they will be meeting with individual Directors to look in detail about equalities aspects within their remits. The Panel will also be attending a number of Forums to speak to a wide selection of people including, for example: young people via a Big Conversation workshop, the Disability Forum, and 50+ network Forum.

Projected End Date: March 2019

2. Follow Up on Completed Inquiries:

Follow-ups of inquiries will consider both the implementation of scrutiny recommendations and wider impact / difference made. Inquiry Panels are reconvened between 6-12 months after cabinet decision on Inquiry reports.

Inquiry	Cabinet Decision	Recommendations			Follow Up Panel Meeting
		Agreed	Partly	Rejected	
Tackling Poverty	15 Jun 2017	12	1	2	15 Oct 2018 COMPLETE
Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services	16 Feb 2017	13	1	1	(i) 15 Nov 2017 (ii) 21 Nov 2018 COMPLETE
Regional Working	16 Aug 2018	11	0	0	May 2019

3. Performance Panels:

Performance Panels enable regular and structured in-depth monitoring of performance and challenge within these key areas:

a) **Service Improvement & Finance** (convener: Cllr Chris Holley)

The last meeting on 13 November focussed on finance, reviewing a range of financial monitoring reports. The next meeting on 11 December includes a budget update, the Annual Review of Well-being Objectives and Corporate Plan 2018/22, and the Planning Annual Performance Report.

b) **Schools Performance** (convener: Cllr Mo Sykes)

The panel has two meetings scheduled in December the first on the 11th to look at performance of the Education Improvement Service and the Pupil Deprivation Grant spend in Swansea. The second meeting will take place on the 17th where Councillors will carry out pre-decision scrutiny on the Small Schools Review and the School Organisation linked to the Welsh Education Plan.

c) **Public Services Board** (convener: Cllr Mary Jones)

The next meeting on 5 December will look at progress with the Public Services Board as well as a focus on the Working with Nature Public Services Board objective.

d) **Child & Family Services** (convener: Cllr Paxton Hood-Williams)

The Panel met in October and received an update on the Youth Offending Service, discussed the performance monitoring reports for the Service and received feedback on the Inspection reports for Foster Swansea and Child and Family Services. The next meeting on 18 December will receive an update on the Corporate Parenting Board, will look at performance monitoring for the Service and will receive a report on the Looked After Children Audit undertaken by the Department.

e) **Adult Services** (convener: Cllr Peter Black)

The Panel met on 20 November to look at performance monitoring, the Wales Audit Office report on Strategic Commissioning of Accommodation Services for People with Learning Difficulties and to receive a briefing on Social Services annual review of charges. The next meeting on 11 December will receive an update on the Social Work Practice Framework and Social Care Wales will be attending to discuss training they are delivering in relation to this. The Panel will also receive an update from the Cabinet Member on how the Council's policy commitments translate to Adult Services.

f) **Development & Regeneration** (convener: Cllr Jeff Jones)

A progress report appears separately in the agenda as Item No. 8.

4. **Regional Scrutiny:**

This is collaborative scrutiny with other Local Authorities for topics / issues of shared interest or concern, and models of regional working.

a) **Education Through Regional Working**

A regional scrutiny councillors group meets to coordinate scrutiny work and ensure a consistent approach across the six councils participating in ERW. At present this involves two meetings per year. Swansea is represented by the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee and Convener of the Schools Performance Panel.

The Group have agreed to an extra meeting on the 10 January 2019 where they have invited the Chair of the ERW Joint Committee and the Lead Director to discuss the ERW review and reform programme. This meeting will be hosted in Swansea. The next scheduled meeting is 25 March 2019.

Swansea's Scrutiny Team is providing the support for this group as the Council's contribution to ERW.

b) **Swansea Bay City Deal**

The first meeting of the Joint Scrutiny Committee, made up of Councillors for the four authorities involved, took place on 20 November in Carmarthen. The Committee, which will scrutinise the work of the Joint Committee responsible for delivering the City Deal Programme, is serviced by Neath Port Talbot Council. Swansea Councillor representatives are: Jan Curtice, Phil Downing & Mary Jones.

5. Working Groups:

A number of topics have been identified which will be dealt with through one-off Working Groups. These enable a 'light-touch' approach to specific topics of concern and will be planned as a one-off meeting primarily involving discussion with relevant cabinet member(s) / officer(s) (and any other persons called) to gather information, ask questions, and raise any concerns.

a) **Local Flood Risk Management** (convener: Cllr Peter Jones)

This is an annual recurring item in the work programme. The Working Group held an additional meeting on 8 October to monitor progress on the recommendations made by the Group following its meeting on 20 February 2018. The annual recurring meeting will be held in 4 to 6 months to monitor progress on the delivery of the Flood Risk Management Plan.

b) **Air & Noise Pollution** (convener: Cllr Joe Hale)

A meeting of the Working Group took place on the 6 November 2018 which enabled Councillor to look at the information, question and discuss the situation in Swansea and there effects including how pollution is measured/monitored and the efforts taking place to tackle problems faced. A letter has been sent to the Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure Management and a response is awaited. Following which these letters will be presented to the Scrutiny Programme Committee.

c) **Residents Parking** (convener: Cllr Peter May)

This meeting was scheduled for 8 November but has been delayed due to resource issues within the department, and will allow time for information required to be provided. The meeting will be rearranged early in the new calendar year. It will focus on concerns that have been raised about the new electronic permit issuing process and enable relevant information to be discussed and questions to be asked.

e) **Welfare Reform** (convener: Cllr Louise Gibbard)

A meeting of the Working Group has been arranged for 14 January 2019 which will enable information, questions and discussion on the impact of welfare reform in Swansea, e.g. Universal Credit, and work / measures in place to support citizens and mitigate problems.

f) **Environmental Enforcement** (convener: Cllr Jeff Jones)

This will enable information, questions and discussion about what is being done in relation to the enforcement / prevention of environmental issues such as fly tipping, dog fouling, litter, pavement parking etc., concerns about which seem to be regularly raised by the public.

Further Working Groups to be convened in the second half of 2018/19 (membership / conveners to be appointed in due course):

- **Tourism**

This will enable assessment of current activities taking into account previous scrutiny inquiry, and include discussion on issue raised about the maintenance / development of coastal path.

- **Anti-Social Behaviour**

This will enable information, questions and discussion on current approaches to tackle anti-social behaviour in our communities and their effectiveness.

- **Digital Inclusion**

This will enable councillors to follow up on the Working Group meeting held in March 2017. At that meeting the Working Group detailed a number of issues to be considered as part of a review of the Council's digital inclusion strategy. Councillors will be able to consider how well prepared both the Council itself and the public is to use and communicate / engage via digital technology.

- **Archive Service**

This would enable discussion about current service delivery, performance, and challenges. There is particular concern about accommodation issues and their effect on the service.